

*Supply*

charges have risen so high. The government refuses to cut back on its budgets. What are we stuck with? Now we have to go with a higher number of zero in something.

It is a shame the government cannot understand what the people want. It will not take the bull by the horns.

**Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River):** Mr. Speaker, I go back to the issue my colleague raised as it relates to infrastructure.

There seems to be an underlying motive in the Reform Party's attitude that money should not be spent on infrastructure because they are part time jobs and that when there is a debt, the money should not be spent or used toward the development of infrastructure.

Even though we have financial and fiscal problems—we all admit it; we are not suggesting otherwise—his party is suggesting that we should not bother with infrastructure in regions like mine which of course are huge. There are 800,000 square kilometres with virtually no roads that have tremendous potential, as I mentioned before.

Should we hold off on trying to develop regions like that until some day when we may be able to get our debt back to zero? It is going to take a significant amount of time if we are reasonable about it. I need to know from the member whether he is suggesting that we should put everything on hold and let infrastructure crumble and fall apart as is the case in other countries around the world.

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have to go back a way on this one. We are in debt. It is so hard to get it through over there. We are borrowing \$40 billion a year. The reason there are no roads or some infrastructure is breaking down in the first place is that we have been borrowing money on the backs of the taxpayers for years. They do not have it through their skulls yet that they have borrowed, borrowed and borrowed. We cannot afford these programs any longer.

I might add that I talked to several mayors about the infrastructure program. Basically in many cases, and I am not suggesting all of them, there may be some areas that require purposeful funding for infrastructure. In some cases the mayors said that these were jobs they were going to do in the first place. Their costs have been cut. Instead of having 100 per cent infrastructure costs coming out of the residential taxpayer dollar, the provincial government will pick up some and the federal government will pick up some.

• (2055)

All the government has succeeded in doing is borrowing more money on the backs of the taxpayers. That is the philosophy we have here. It is smoke and mirrors.

**Mr. Tony Valeri (Lincoln):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this evening to speak on this most auspicious occasion, the debate on the first main estimates of the government.

Other members have talked about how the government has demonstrated its resolve to restore order to Canada's fiscal house. I would like to talk about another pledge that we made to Canadians: to provide government services that Canadians want and need in an affordable and efficient manner. We promised to work to eliminate overlap and duplication with other levels of government and to ensure that the Canadian taxpayer is not paying twice for the same or similar services.

The government is very serious about keeping these pledges and about restoring the faith of Canadians in their government institutions. It is equally serious about ensuring that a public service that has been cut repeatedly over the last 10 years is still able to deliver quality, responsive services to their clients.

I would like to talk about some of the many management initiatives of the government that will enable us to keep our promises to Canadians. As the February budget announced, the government will release a declaration of quality service by the end of the summer. This declaration will be a service scheme for all public servants to follow. It will describe what the government views as good government service. It will tell Canadians what kind of service and treatment they can expect to receive when they telephone a government number, visit a federal office or write to a government agency.

This declaration will provide clear direction to all public service employees about the kind of service the government wants Canadians to receive from all federal offices. While we may not be able to deliver all services in line with the declaration right now, an achievable but challenging target is one way of getting there.

The declaration is only one part of the government's plan to tell Canadians what they can expect when they use a government service. It will be a broad government-wide vision of quality service.

Just as important as the declaration are the service standards that each department and agency of government are expected to produce. Service standards will build on the quality pledge included in this declaration and go even further. Written in plain language they describe the particular services and programs of each department. They will talk about the actual level of service that Canadians should expect to receive, such as how long before the telephone is answered, applications are processed or letters are responded to. They will include some measures of the cost of the service or program so Canadians can judge if they are getting value for money.